DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 374 669 FL 022 424

AUTHOR Nkemnji, Michael
TITLE On Nweh Adjectives That Show Up as Nouns.
PUB DATE [94]
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference on African Linguistics (25th, New Brunswick, NJ, March 1994).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adjectives; *Bantu Languages; Form Classes (Languages); *Grammar; *Language Patterns; Language Research; Linguistic Theory; *Nouns; *Uncommonly Taught Languages
IDENTIFIERS *Nwe

ABSTRACT

The discussion of Nweh, a Bantu language, focuses on a group of adjectives that can occur in positions where one would expect a noun, and which appear to enter noun classification. Specifically, the reasons that these adjectives have noun properties and that the pronominal class marker for the adjective is invariant are investigated. First, the adjective structure of the language is examined and three classes of adjectives (pure, intransitive, transitive) are distinguished. The first of these, pure adjectives, is the class in question. These differ from others in that they: cannot be modified by adverbs or take comparatives; have noun-like properties; can take number (singular/plural) morphology; can occur independently in nominal positions; take possessive pronouns; and when combined with any noun to form an attributive construction, take a possessive pronoun determined by the adjective rather than the noun. In explanation of these phenomena, it is proposed that these adjectives take these patterns because they have incorporated a null noun, and the agreement is determined by the same empty nominal. Contains 23 references. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Michael N Kemnji
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 374 669

FL 022424

*ON NWEH ADJECTIVES THAT SHOW UP AS NOUNS**

Michael NKEMNJI

UCLA

0. Introduction.

In this paper I want to address certain interesting puzzles relating to the fact that in *Nweh* (Grassfield Bantu, S.W. Cameroon), certain adjectives have the property of being able to occur in positions where one would expect to find a noun and appear to enter into noun classification. In particular, I want to address two questions: One, why do such adjectives have these nominal properties ? Two, why is it the case that the pronominal class marker selected by the adjective is invariant? We will provide an analysis of lexical argument structure of adjectives that provides an answer to both of these questions. Before we embark upon the enterprise we will survey the range of adjectives that Nweh has.

1. The issue.

In many languages, *English, French, Nweh, ...* as well as in a lot of African languages, it is not uncommon for adjectives to show up in NP positions and assume functions typical of NPs. For convenience of exposition we start with the English examples in (1).

(1) a. the poor
b. the rich
c. the blacks
d. the whites
e. the impossible

* I would like to thank Russ Schuh and Hilda Koopman for their insightful comments.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

These adjectives have certain peculiarities. For instance, the English examples in (1 a-d) typically refer to animates [+human]. Despite the fact that they exhibit nominal behavior, these adjectives have properties that distinguish them from real nouns. For example, they are specified as definite; they have plural meaning even if not morphologically marked as plural; they can be modified by adverbs.

(2) a. the very poor
b. the extremely rich
c. the highly talented

while they can be conjoined with similar adjectives, coordination with real nouns is not possible as (3) shows.

(3) a. the rich and the poor
b. the Blacks and the whites
c. * the rich and the students
d. ?* the Blacks and the Professors
e. the Professors and the students

Adjectives in *Nweh* (Grassfield Bantu, S.W. Cameroon) exhibit properties somewhat similar to those outlined above for English but they also show some very unusual properties.

2. Adjectives in *Nweh*.

In Nweh, as in many African languages, 'pure' adjectives are very few and might even be said to form a closed class in the sense that one can easily list all of them. By pure adjectives I mean those lexical items that are specified in the lexicon as belonging to the category of adjectives, as opposed to derived adjectives. In Nweh the pure adjectives are for the most part limited to Color and Size/Dimension adjectives. This paucity of adjectives raises the question as to how the full range of adjectival meanings are expressed in these languages. Other adjectival meanings like Quality/Physical properties are expressed in the form of a predicate adjective. This is achieved through the use of a reduced-relative type construction. We will refer to these other adjectives as 'derived adjectives'. While derived adjectives have much in common with regular (stative) verbs we will show that they differ in significant ways from regular (stative) verbs. Even though derived adjectives on the surface appear to be the 'same', we will claim that they split into two types, corresponding to the verb types from which they are derived. We therefore want to claim that adjectives in Nweh pattern essentially into three classes. There appear to be semantic correlations between the different classes.

Class I (Pure Adjectives).

(4)	a.	fîn	'black'
	b.	bâŋ	'red'
	c.	fɔ̀ɔ́	'white'
(5)	a.	mía	'big/large'
	b.	síà	'long/tall'
	c.	kèm	'short/stout'

- These are typically color adjectives (4) and some Size/Dimension adjectives (5).

Class II ('Intransitive' Adjectives.)

(6)	a.	ǹfâŋ	'be big'
		ǹsɛh	'be long'
		ŋ̀vəh	'be short'
		ǹdîi	'be sweet'
		ǹdrɔ́ɔ̀	'be bitter'
		ǹbuát	'be soft'

These are typically 'quality adjectives'. We will argue they are derived from unaccusative-type verbs.

Class III ('Transitive' Adjectives)

These are derived from transitive verbs. Thus the attributive adjectives in (7) are derived from their corresponding VP counterparts.

(7)	a.	ǹgɔ̀? ngesáŋ	---->	ngesaŋ ŋ-gɔ?ɔ	
		to grind corn		corn Pf. ground	'ground corn'
	b.	ŋ̀káŋ əsɔ̂	---->	əsɔ̂ ə-kâŋ	
		to fry fish		fish Pf. fried	'fried fish'
	c.	ǹču lebɔ́?	----->	lebɔ̂? le-cúŭ	
		to boil pumpkin		pumpkin Pf. boiled	'boiled pumpkin'

Here the head noun corresponds to the internal argument of the verb. Below I discuss some properties of each of these three classes of adjectives such as their function within the noun phrase (attributive or predicative function); their distribution within the noun phrase (i.e. pre- or post- nominal); and their morphological properties i.e. whether or not they take a prefix. We will show that only the class I ('Pure') adjectives can occur independently without an overt head noun as well as select a pronominal class marker.

We discuss the derived adjectives first, and then focus our attention on the pure adjectives as these are the ones that show unusual syntactic properties.

2.1 Class III ('Transitive' adjectives)

Class III adjectives are derived from transitive (action) verbs. Thus we observe from (7) repeated below as (8) that the attributive adjectives in (b), appear to simply be stative verbal forms derived from the active transitive verbs in (a).

(8) i. a. ŋ̀gɔ̀ʔ ŋgesáŋ
to grind corn

b. ŋgesaŋ ŋ-gɔ̀ʔɔ
corn Pf. ground 'ground corn'

ii. a. ŋ̀káŋ əsɔ̂
to fry fish

b. əsɔ̂ ə-káŋ
fish Pf. fried 'fried fish'

iii. a. ǹčû lebɔ̀ʔ
to boil pumpkin

b. lebɔ̀ʔ le-cúū
pumpkin Pf. boiled 'boiled pumpkin'

We notice a semantic shift in the relation between the (a) sentences in (8) and their corresponding stative forms in (b); These sentences also show a passive-like alternation. The (a) sentences designate actions, whereas the (b) sentences designate a property which is predicated of some noun. The internal (theme) argument of the transitive verbs in (a) have been "preposed" and they now function as the first (subject) argument of the predicates in (b) and these trigger (prefixal) agreement (**Pf.**) on the adjective.

Transitive ('verbal') adjectives basically have an attributive function, i.e. they occur only as nominal attributes and cannot be used as inchoative predicates as the ungrammaticality of the (b) sentences in (9) indicate.

(9) i. a. ŋgesaŋ ŋ̀-gɔ̀ʔɔ̄
corn Pf. ground 'ground corn'

b. * ŋgesaŋ é gɔ̀ʔɔ̄
corn S.Agr ground 'the corn ground'

ii. a. akéndɔ̀ŋ à-túā
plantain Pf. roast 'roasted plantains'

b. * akéndɔŋ á túa
plantain S.Agr roast 'the plantain(s) roasted'

iii. a. lebɔ̂ʔ le-cúū
pumpkin Pf. boiled 'boiled pumpkin'

b. * lebɔ̂ʔ é cúū
pumpkin S.Agr boiled 'the pumpkin boiled'

Class III adjectives cannot occur independently without an overt head noun or a proform *one* (10) and (11), and they do not trigger noun class agreement on the possessive pronoun as 'pure' adjectives do.

(10) a. ŋgesaŋ ŋ̀-gɔ̀ʔɔ̄
corn Pf. ground 'ground corn'

b. zàa ŋ̀-gɔ̀ʔɔ̀
one Pf. ground 'the ground one'
(speaking of corn, ...)

c. * ŋ̀-gɔ̀ʔɔ̄ ' ground'

(11) a. akendɔŋ à-túā
plantain Pf. roast 'roasted plantains'

b. zàa à-túā 'the roasted one'
one Pf. roasted

c. * à -túā ' ground'

2.2 Class II ('Intransitive adjectives')

Class II, the 'intransitive' adjectives typical denote qualities / physical properties. We argue these are derived from unaccusative verbs.

(12)

ndíi	'be sweet'
ndrɔ́ɔ	'be bitter'
nbʊ̀h	'be spoiled'
ndɛt	'be heavy'
nduŋ	'be hot'
nbaŋ	'be ripe'
njuŋ	'be dry'

They have verb-like morphology. Thus we notice from the examples in (12) that they all have an n- prefix which is characteristic of verbs in their citation (bare infinitival) form.

As nominal attributes, class II adjectives occur post nominally (like the class III adjectives) with an agreement prefix that is determined by the prefix of the head noun. cf. (13).

(13) a. afû à - lîi
medicine Pf. sweet 'sweet medicine'

b. mbàzāŋ ǹ júŋŋ [1]
peanuts Agr. dry 'dry peanuts'

We observe from (14a) and (14b) that class II adjectives can be used predicatively, in which case the noun functioning as subject triggers subject agreement. Observe also that they can be tensed (14c).

(14) a. afú jɯ̀ɔ́ á lîi
med. this S.Agr sweet 'this medicine is sweet'

b. mbàzáŋ jɯ̀ɔ́ è júŋŋ
peanuts this S.Agr. dry 'these peanuts are dry'

c. mbàzáŋ jɯ̀ɔ́ è **kè?** tè njúŋ [2]
peanuts this S.Agr. **P-1** Neg dry 'these peanuts were not dry'

Like the transitive adjectives (class III), the intransitive adjectives (class II) cannot occur independently without the head noun or without a proform as (15) indicates. Class II adjectives also do not govern possessive pronoun agreement.

(15) a. afû à lîi
med. Pf. sweet 'sweet medicine'

b. zàa à lîi
one Pf. sweet 'the sweet one' (speaking of med.)

c. * à lîi
Pf. sweet 'sweet [e]'

In terms of their internal distribution, class II adjectives can be modified by adverbs as in (16).

(16) a. nyém ndîi 'slightly sweet'

nɒ́ɔ́ ndîi 'very sweet'

---

[1] We believe the lengthened final nasal segment is as a result of the tone change; The final segment is therefore lengthened to bear the extra tone; it is therefore considered tonal rather than segmental.

[2] The nasal prefix on the verb in (14c) is triggered by the 'recent' past tense marker (P-1) *kè?*.

b.	nyém ŋfáŋ	'slightly big'
	nbó ŋfáŋ	' very big'

Class II adjectives enter into comparatives.

(17)	a.	ndĩ nčíà be sweet pass	'sweeter than...' / 'over-sweet'
	b.	ŋfáŋ nčíà be big pass	'bigger than...' / 'over-big'

There is a neat parallel between class III and class II adjectives. We have suggested that both class III and class II adjectives are derived from verbs. The difference between the two classes is based on the verb type from which they are derived. It is clear that class III adjectives are stative forms that are derived from transitive verbs. We will claim that class II adjectives are statives derived from unaccusative verbs. To show that class III and II adjectives derive from different verb-types, we will show that both verb types that we claim class III and class II adjectives are derived from behave differently. We refer to the verb classes using the same numbering that we used for the adjectives; so class II verbs will refer to the verb class from which class II adjectives are derived.

Class III verbs have just a causative usage and do not have the inchoative / causative alternants (cf. the (b) examples in (9) above); On the other hand, class II verbs have the inchoative / unaccusative usage cf. (18a) and (19a) but not the causative. cf. ungrammaticality of (18c) and (19c).

(18)	a.	afû á lĩi medicine S.Agr sweet	the medicine is sweet'
	b.	afû à lĩi medicine Pf. sweet	'sweet medicine'
	c. *	ǹ dĩi afū be sweet medicine	'(to) sweeten the medine'
(19)	a.	mbəzáŋ è júŋ̄ peanuts S.Agr. dry	'the peanuts are dry'
	b.	mbəzáŋ ǹ júŋ̄ŋ peanuts Pf. dry	'dry peanuts'
	c. *	ǹ júŋ̄ŋ mbəzaŋ be dry peanuts	' (to) dry the peanuts'

Thus both classes of verbs do not undergo the causative / inchoative alternation. They are either strictly causatives (class III) or inchoatives (class II).

Generally, if a verb has both a causative and an inchoative usage, it is the case that two independent morphological forms (lexemes) exist [3]: one for the causative usage, and the other for the inchoative usage. Such forms involve a 'morphological blockade' as we observe from the contrast between (20) and (21) that involve *ǹjúŋ* 'be dry' and *nbòō* 'to dry'.

(20) a. mbòō mbəzāŋ
to dry dry ' (to) dry peanuts'

b. mbəzâŋ m̀ bòō
peanuts Pf. dry 'dried peanuts'

c. * mbəzaŋ é bòó
peanuts S.Agr dry ' the peanuts dried'

(21) a. * njúŋ mbəzaŋ
be dry peanuts ' (to) dry peanuts'

b. mbəzaŋ ǹ júŋ̄ŋ
peanuts Pf. dry 'dry peanuts'

c. mbəzaŋ é- júŋ̄ŋ
peanuts S.Agr dry ' the peanuts are dry'

The discussion above indicates that both class III and class II adjectives are derived, and that they share a lot in common. In the rest of the discussion, except where necessary, we will simply refer to class III and class II adjectives as 'derived' adjectives.

2.3 Class I ('Pure' adjectives)

Class I (Pure adjectives) form a very interesting class of adjectives. Class I adjectives can be said to form what one might call a closed class in the sense that one can easily list all of them. Semantically, Class one adjectives are basically adjectives of color and size/dimention. cf. (22) and (23) respectively.

(22) a. fín 'black'
b. báŋ 'red'
c. fə́ɔ́ 'white'

---

[3] There appear to be a class of exception to this generalization possed by verbs like *ndoŋé* 'to melt'; *ǹsɛ́* 'to break' and *ǹšíà* 'to tear', that show the causative/inchoative alternation. A possible explanation could be to say that whereas other causative verbs obligatorily require an agent 'alternating transitive' verbs like *ndoŋé* 'to melt' only optionally require that there be an agent. Alternatively one could argue that such verbs involve two lexemes that happen to have the same morphological form.

(23) a. mía 'big/large'
b. sía 'long/tall'
c. kèm 'short/stout'

What makes this class of adjectives so interesting is that it seems to be neither fish nor fowl, so to speak. On the one hand this class appears to be adjectives but on the other hand, they appear to be nouns. We will start with properties that class I adjectives share with other adjectives classes, and then go on to discuss properties that class I adjectives share with nouns.

Class I adjectives, unlike the derived adjectives have a Ø-prefix as we observe in (22) and (23). Class I adjectives occur prenominally within the noun phrase. Thus the word order is [Adj.-N] as in (24). As we noted above, derived adjectives invariably have a [N-Adj.] word order.

(24) a. fín ndrɔ́
black cloth 'black cloth'

b. bâŋ lĩí
red horse 'red horse'

c. mía abɔ̀
big bag 'big bag'

We should point out here that Nweh is a highly configurational language with a head-complement word order. How then do we explain the word order variation between the two classes of adjectives ? This is one of the problems that we expect our proposal to account for.

Within the noun phrase, class I adjectives typically have an attributive function. cf. (24). However they can be used predicatively, in which case they are obligatorily reduplicated as in (25).

(25) a. ndrɔ́ é fínfín
cloth S.Agr. black 'the cloth is black'

b. ndrɔ́ é bâŋbâŋ 'the cloth is red'
cloth S.Agr red

c. ndrɔ́ é míamía 'the cloth is big'
cloth S.Agr big

Reduplication in Nweh is a property of lexical adjectives. The reduplication here might be indicative of the sort of morphological blockade that exists between the different classes of adjectives. Just as we observed that there exists a neat parallel between class III and class II adjectives, we will show that there also exists a similar parallel between class III & class II adjectives on the one hand and class I adjectives on the other hand. Thus we will see that one (semantic) adjective can have two lexemes each of which belongs to a different class, and exhibits behaviors typical of the class to which it belongs. We illustrate this phenomenon in (26).

(26)	i.	a.	mía	'big / large'
		b.	n-fáŋ	'be big/large'
	ii.	a.	šíà	'tall / long
		b.	n-sɛh	'be tall/long'
	iii.	a.	kèm	'short / stout'
		b.	ŋ-vəh	'be short/stout'

In (26) the adjectives in (a) belong to class I whereas the (b) belong to the derived class of adjectives (class II). The parallel noted in (26) in essence summarizes the properties of 'derived' adjectives on the one hand and the 'pure' adjectives on the other hand. The adjectives in (26a) must be in pre nominal position when used attributively. cf. (27.i); They can be used as predicates, in which case they occur duplicated cf. (27.ii). The corresponding stative forms in (26b) do not occur in pre- nominal position. Syntactically they always occur in post nominal position as in (28). In terms of their morphology, they have verb-like morphology, thus their forms are predictable.

(27)	.i	a.	mía ndía	'big house'
			* ndía mía	
		b.	kèm alàŋá	'short chair'
			* alàŋá kèm	
	.ii	a.	ndía é míamía	
			house Agr. big	'the house is big'
		b.	alàŋá á kèmkèm	
			chair Agr short	'the chair is short'
(28)		a.	ndía é fáŋ	
			house Agr. be big	'the house is big'
		b.	alàŋá á vàhə̄	
			chair Agr. be short	'the chair is short'

While derived adjectives can be modified by adverbs like *nyém* 'slight', *nbó* 'very', class I adjectives cannot be modified by adverbs cf. (29).

(29)	a.	mbó / nyém *n*báŋ	
		very / slightly be red	'very / slightly red/ripe'
	**	mbó / nyém báŋ	
		very / slightly red	
	b.	mbó / nyém *n*fáŋ	
		very / slightly be big	'very / slightly big/large'
	**	mbó / nyém míā	
		very / slightly big	

Also, class I adjectives unlike other adjectives cannot take comparatives.

(30) a. *n*báŋ ǹčíā
be ripe pf. pass ' too ripe / over-ripe'

* báŋ ǹčíā

b. *n*fáŋ ǹčíā
be big pf. pass ' too big / bigger than'

* mía ǹčíā

So far, we have seen significant evidence to suggest that pure adjectives differ in important respects from the derived adjectives. We will now turn our attention to some properties that not only set class I (pure) adjectives further apart from the other two classes of (derived) adjectives, but also makes class I adjectives very similar to nouns,

Syntactically class I adjectives exhibit noun-like properties. From the examples in (26a) we observe that pure adjectives, like nouns, denote entities rather than a state or an attribute as is the case with the derived adjectives(26b). Thus the adjectives like *fín* 'black', ***mía*** 'big'...can occur in isolation and would mean "the black (one)", "the big (one)" respectively.

(31)	a.	fín	~	bəfín	'black' (sg./pl.)
	b.	báŋ	~	bəbáŋ	'red' (sg. /pl.)
	c.	fàɔ́	~	bəfàɔ́	'white' (sg./pl.)
	d.	mía	~	bəmía	'big/large' (sg./pl.)
	e.	síà	~	bəšíà	'long/tall' (sg./pl.)
	f.	kèm	~	bəkèm	'short/stout' (sg./pl.)

Here we also notice that class one adjectives can take number (singular/plural) morphology. Number typically is associated with DPs/NPs. From the [N-Adj.] attributive constructions in (9) repeated here as (32), we noted that nominal modifiers typically show agreement with the head noun, however we do not see any such agreement in the examples in (33) .

(32) a. ŋgèsâŋ ŋ-gɔ̀ʔɔ
corn Pf. ground 'ground corn'

b. afû à -lîi
med. Pf. sweet 'sweet medicine'

c. lebɔ̂ʔ le-cúŭ
pumpkin Pf. boiled 'boiled pumpkin'

(33) a. fín ndrɔ́ ~ * ndrɔ́ fín
black cloth/dress

b. síà ndrɔ́ ~ * ndrɔ́ síà
long dress

c. mía ndrɔ́ ~ * ndrɔ́ mía
large dress

The fact that the noun does not trigger prefix agreement (Pf.) in (33) suggests one of two things: (1) either the heads of these phrases are not nouns, or (2) that the noun has not yet moved high enough within the DP to trigger agreement. For the moment we leave both of these options open.

With regard to their external distribution, pure adjectives can appear independently in noun phrase positions without an accompanying head noun or proform like English *one*.

(34) a. Atem à kɛ̀ʔ n-júɔ̄ (fín) mʙɔ́
A. S.Agr P-1 buy (black) goat
'Atem bought a (black) goat.'

b. Atem à kɛ̀ʔ n-júɔ̄ fín
'Atem bought a black (one)' (speaking of goats)

c. Atem à kɛ̀ʔ n-júɔ̄ fín bó bâŋ.
'Atem bought a black (one) & a red (one) (speaking of goats).

The coordination test in (34c) further indicates that pure adjectives can occur independently in nominal positions without an overt head noun or proform. In contrast, derived adjectives cannot occur on their own in nominal positions.

(35) a. akendɔ̀ŋ à-túā bó *(zhà) à-káŋ̄
plantain pf. roasted and one Pf. fried
'roasted plantains and fried plantains'

b. afú à-lîi bó * (zhà) à-rɔ̀ɔ̄
med. pf. sweet and one pf. bitter
'sweet medication and bitter one'

c. bâŋ ndrɔ́ bó (*zhà) fín
red cloth and one black
' the red cloth and the black one'

In (35a) and (35b) that both involve derived adjectives, one cannot conjoin an NP like *akendɔ̀ŋ à-túā* 'roasted plaintains' with *à-káŋ̄* ' fried (one)' if there is no proform *zhà* 'one' or an overt noun. But in (35c) that involve class I (pure adjectives) we notice just the opposite effect where the presence of a proform is not possible.

What makes (class I) pure adjectives the more unusual is the fact that they take possessive pronouns and appear to enter into noun classification; cf. (37). One of the hallmarks of Bantu nouns is that they subcategorize into classes (sometimes also referred to as genders). The way linguists determine the class membership of each noun is based on a set of (syntactic) agreements that the noun

governs. Thus we observe in (36) that the possessive pronominal class marker varies depending on the class of the head noun .

(36) a. ndrɔ́ *jɛ̀*
cloth my 'my cloth'

b. asém a*jɛ́*
oil mill my 'my oil mill'

c. esùɔ́ *gɛ̀*
friend my 'my friend'

d. ŋkɛ̀ʔ *gɛ́*
lamp my 'my lamp'

e. lebɔ̄ʔ *lɛ́*
pumpkin my 'my pumpkin'

Pure adjectives govern agreements typical of nouns. One such agreement is the possessive pronominal agreement.

(37) a. fín gɛ̀
black my 'my black one' (speaking of X,...)

b. mía gɛ̀
big my 'my big one'

c. sía gɛ̀
long my 'my long one'

d. kèm gɛ̀
short my 'my short one'

e. bâŋ gɛ̀
red my 'my red one'

The behavior of the adjectives in (37) parallel that of the nouns in (36). However, we notice that whereas the possessive pronouns in (36) vary their form to indicate agreement with the noun class of the head noun, those in (37) that involve pure adjectives, are invariant. If possessive pronominal agreement is indicative of the class to which a noun belongs (as linguists commonly assume) then the lexical heads that trigger class agreement in (37) must all belong to the same class. This leaves us with another question as to what triggers the agreement in (37); Is it some null element that triggers the agreement, or is it just a case of pure coincidence that all adjectives belong to the same class and thus trigger the same agreement ? While the latter alternative is less likely, we will show in the next section that it is not simply the case that the adjectives in (37) are all modifying some empty noun.

3. Adjectives as heads of NPs : A case of syntactic adoption ?

One of the most puzzling phenomenon concerning the behavior of pure adjectives is the fact that if we combine a pure adjective and any noun to form an [Adj.-N] attributive construction, as in (38), the possessive pronominal class marker appears to be determined by the adjective rather than by the noun that one would ordinarily construe as being the head of such a phrase.

(38) a. fín ndrɔ́ *gɛ̀*
black cloth my 'my black cloth'

* fín ndrɔ́ *jɛ̀* cf. (36a)

b. mía asém gɛ̀
big palmoil hut my 'my big palm oil hut'

* mía asem (a)jé cf. (36b)

c. bâŋ ŋkɛ̀ʔ gɛ̀
red lamp my 'my red lamp'

* bâŋ ŋkɛ̀ʔ gé cf. (36d)

Notice that the pronominal class marker *gɛ̀* 'my' in (38a), for example, is the same as that which the adjective *fín* 'black' independently selects; cf. (37a) and unlike that which the noun *ndrɔ́* 'cloth' independently selects cf. (36a). These same facts hold true for (38b) and (38c).

Ordinarily, one would think that the head of the noun phrase in (38a) is *ndrɔ́* 'cloth' and that the head in (38b) and (38c) is *asém* 'oil mill' and *nkɛ̀ʔ* 'lamp' respectively. But strangely enough this does not appear to be the case. The phrases in (38) suggest that for the purposes of (external) agreement, it is the adjectives that determine the agreement and not the nouns that one would normally think of as being the heads of these phrases. It is a well known syntactic fact that heads determine agreement. The fact that the agreements in the phrases in (38) are determined by the adjectives and not by the nouns suggests that the adjectives are heads; It also suggests, though this might sound like a contradiction in terms, that these adjectives are in nominal positions or at least have nominal properties.

The facts that we have sketched above pose a fundamental descriptive dilemma. It is clear that class I (pure adjectives) show properties typical of adjectives; It is equally clear that they show properties typical of nouns.
In an attempt to capture the 'intersecting' nature of such adjectives, Martin (1986) quoting the American Heritage Dictionary refers to phrases of the sort 'the poor', 'the rich', 'the Blacks'... as "adnouns", thus suggesting a blend of adjectives and nouns. The question one must address, however is how does one account for the fact that adjectives can at the same time be nouns, without violating fundamental

assumptions of syntactic theory such as the universality of the lexical categories (N, V, A, P,...) and their inherent properties ?

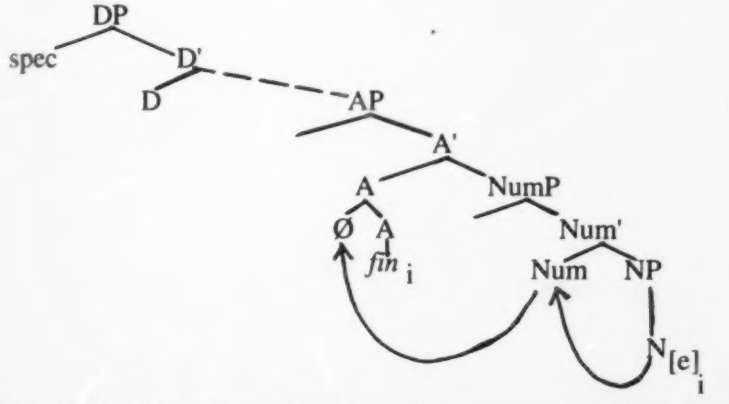
4. A Proposal .

Our proposal as to how to solve the questions posed above is to say that the behavior of pure adjectives stems from their underlying lexical properties. We will argue that pure adjectives have a complex lexical representation as in (39).

(39) $[_A [_N e]\ A\ ]$

According to (39), we claim that pure adjectives project an empty argument position in their lexical argument structure and that this empty argument position is licensed by incorporation. Since the lexical structure of pure adjectives involves an empty nominal, the noun by virtue of the Projection Principle must project a syntactic phrase. The complete lexical structure is represented in (40). Since the head of the NP is null, the only way its projection can be fully licensed is for the adjective to incorporate the null head of the NP.

(40)



The structure depicted in (40) indicates that pure adjectives are treated here as heads whose projections enter into the main projection line. This might seem unpopular given the fact that in most of the literature, adjectives are treated as adjuncts. However, there has been some recent work in the literature arguing that adjectives can and do enter into the main projection line. (For valuable contributions along this line of research, see Sportiche (1994)).

4.1 "Incorporation as a theory of grammatical *category* changing"

Given a lexical representation like (39), noun incorporation into the adjective will result in a structure like (41).

N-incorporation: (41) $[\,[_N Ø\,]\,[_A A]\,]$

The representation in (41) raises the question as to what is the appropriate category label for a representation like (41) ? We will claim here that the syntactic category label for (41) 'intersects' between an adjective and a noun and therefore is capable of playing limited functions of either an adjective or a noun. Derived constructions in natural language often have peculiar properties that are unlike the categories from which they derive or that they yield even though they may share certain properties.
In much of the discussion on incorporation people tend to be agnostic as to the resulting category label when two independent words of different syntactic categories incorporate. We here suggest that there is the possibility that such a category will show a bit of each of the categories from which it is derived. We refer to the sort of incorporation that results in a syntactic category change as *syntactic adoption*, and to the resulting 'intersecting' head as an *adopted head* , if it ends up in the head position of a different syntactic category and assumes the properties of such a category. Therefore whenever a lexical item (other than what, semantically speaking would be considered the head) functions as the head of a phrase of a different category, *head adoption* will be assumed to have taken place. A typical case of syntactic adoption would be when adjectives function as heads of noun phrases.

4.2 'pseudo' NP-head as an adjunct.

The structure depicted in (40) is going to correctly account for the cases where a bare adjective occurs in a nominal position as in (42); (see also (37)).

(42) a. mǐ ŋ- kɔ́ŋ fín guɔ̀
I S.Agr like black this
' I like this black (one)' [speaking of X]

b. mía guɔ̀ à bɔ̂ŋ àgɛ́
big this S.Agr please me
' This big (one) pleases me' [speaking of X]

The question arises as to the analysis of examples like (33), repeated below as (43), where an overt noun appears with a pure adjective ?

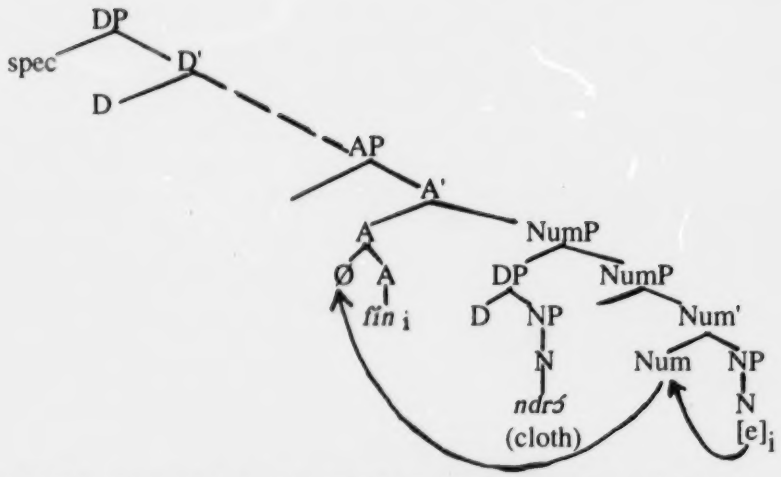
(43) a. fín ndrɔ́
black cloth ' (a) black cloth'

b. báŋ séŋ
red bird ' (a) red bird'

c. mía abɔ̀
big bag ' (a) big bag'

We will argue that the nouns in constructions like (43) are actually in an adjoined position and therefore are adjuncts not heads. We assume a structure like (44)

(44)



The structure in (44) is the same as that in (40) but with the DP in an adjoined position. Given a structure like (44), where the DP is in an adjoined position, it cannot interfer with the incorporation of the head noun. Thus we see that such adjoined NPs correctly do not block head movement. This apart, we see that the pronominal class marker of the phrases like (43) are determined not by the noun but by the adjective as (45) shows.

(45) a. fín ndrɔ́ gɛ̀ / * jɛ̀
black cloth my 'my black cloth'

b. báŋ séŋ gɛ̀
red bird my 'my red bird'

c. mía abɔ̀ gɛ̀ / *ajɛ́
big bag my 'my big bag'

Recall that Nweh is a highly configurational language with a head-complement word order. By saying that the adjective is the head of phrases such as those in (38) and (43), we maintain consistency with the word order pattern as all other phrases are underlyingly head initial.

An adjective always relates to some noun that can be construed as having the quality expressed by the adjective. Thus if there is no overt head noun that the adjective is predicated of, the logical tendency will be to ascribe the quality expressed by the adjective to the closest NP if such an option exists. In the case of (44), it is the adjunct NP that gets interpreted as being predicated of the adjective. Thus (43a) *fín ndrɔ́* although translated as ' black cloth' literally means something like "the 'one' black, the cloth" i.e. *the 'one' black such that (cloth, black)* ; where, what appears to be the head of the noun phrase is actually an adjunct noun.

5. More evidence for noun adjunction.

The structure in (44), where the DP is assumed to be in an adjoined position is supported by the fact that there also exist parallel cases of NP/DP adjunction where a nominal adjunct intervenes between a head noun and a possessive pronominal class marker selected by the head noun.

(46)	a.	foto *gɛ̀* picture my	'my picture' (Poss./theme)
	b.	ndía *jɛ̀* house my	'my house' (Poss.)
	c.	foto ndía̋ *gɛ̀* picture house my	'my picture of a house' ** A picture of my house.

Notice that in (46a) the possessive class marker is ***gɛ̀*** while in (46b) it is ***jɛ̀*** . But in (25c) the pronominal class marker is ***gɛ̀*** -that which is selected by *foto* 'picture', even though ***ndía*** 'house' intervenes. This favors an analysis where ***ndía*** 'house' is an adjunct parallel to the structure in (44).

The solution we have proposed to account for the dilemma posed by pure adjectives straightforwardly explains a number of puzzles that we noted above, and others that at first sight appear to be due to mere coincidence. First the proposal gives us an explanation as to why pure adjectives appear to take possessive pronouns. The reason is that these adjectives have incorporated a (null) noun. Second the proposal not only explain why pure adjectives independently select a possessive class marker but why the class marker is invariant (cf. 37). This is due to the fact that the agreement in such cases is actually determined by the same empty nominal .

*****

REFERENCES.

Abney, S. (1987). *The English Noun Phrase in its Sentential Aspect.* Ph.D. diss., MIT.

Baker & Hale (1990). "Relativized Minimality and Pronoun Incorporation." *Linguistic Inquiry* 21: 289 - 297.

Bresnan, J. & S. Mchombo (1989). "On the Syntax of Bantu Noun Class Prefixes." ms., Berkeley.

Chomsky, N. (1992). "A Minimalist Program for Linguistic Theory." *MIT Occasional Papers in Linguistics*, 1.

Carstens, V.M. (1991). *The Morphology and Syntax of Determiner Phrases in Kiswahili.* Ph.D. diss., UCLA.

Corbett, G. G. (1991). *Gender.* Cambridge: University press.

Dunstan, M. E. (1966). *Tone and Concord Systems in Ngwe Nominals.* Ph. D. Thesis, University of London.

Hale, Ken et al. (1994). "Igbo Bipositional Verbs in a Syntactic Theory of Argument Structure". Paper presented at ACAL25. Rutgers University, March 25-27, 1994.

Johnson, K. (1990). "The Syntax of Inflectional Paradigms." ms., University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Kinyalolo, K. (1991). *Syntactic Dependencies and the Spec-head Agreement hypothesis in Kilega.* Ph.D. diss., UCLA.

Koopman, H. (1992) "Licensing Heads." ms. UCLA.

---------- (1993a). "The Internal and External Distribution of Pronominal DPs." ms. UCLA.

---------- (1993b). "The Structure of Dutch PPs." ms. UCLA.

Martin, J. B. (1986). *Null Elements in Syntax and their ability to Head Govern.* M.A. thesis, UCLA.

Myers, S. (1987). *Tone and the Structure of words in Shona.* Ph.D. diss., U. Mass., Amherst.

Nkemnji, M. (1992). *Issues in the Syntax of Negation in Nweh.* M.A. thesis, UCLA.

---------- (1993). "The structure of DPs in Nweh." ms., UCLA.

Pollock, J. (1989). "Verb Movement, Universal Grammar and the Structure of IP." L.I. 20, 3: 365-424.

Ritter, E. (1990). "Cross Linguistic Evidence for Number Phrase." ms. UQAM.

Sportiche, D. (1990). "Movement Agreement and Case." ms. UCLA.

---------- (1994). "Against Adjunction." ms. UCLA.

Stowell, T. (1993). "Syntax of Tense" ms. UCLA.

Valois, D. (1991). *The Internal Syntax of DP.* Ph.D. diss., UCLA.